



WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Monday, July 12, 2004, for the purpose of meeting with the clergy and other leaders of religious organizations.

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 8:00 p.m. It was held in the Council Room of the Municipal Building.

PRESENT WERE: Council members Konrad E. Herling, Leta M. Mach, Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts, and Mayor Judith F. Davis.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager; and Kathleen Gallagher, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Delores Downs, Trudy Conrad, Catholic Community of Greenbelt; James Fischer, Greenbelt Baha'i Community; Rev. Stephen Mentz, Holy Cross Lutheran Church; Rabbi Jonathan Cohen, Mishkan Torah Synagogue; Rev. DaeHwa Park, Mowatt Memorial United Methodist Church; Rev. Jaco ten Hove, Paint Branch Unitarian Universalist Church; Rev. Walter Tappe, Kathleen McFarland, St. Hugh's Catholic Church; Mr. Parmesh Dwived, Sri Siva Vishnu Temple; Janet Jacobs Parker, Kevin Hammett, Community Relations Advisory Board; Barbara Havekost, Catholic Community of Greenbelt; Natasha Brown, the Gazette; Bay Woods, Greenbelt News Review.

Following introductions, Mayor Davis explained the rationale for stakeholder meetings. She commented that the clergy hear concerns about how things are going in the community that City government might not always be informed of, and she asked if there were any problems or issues anyone would like to make Council aware of. Noting that there were more older people in his congregation than younger people, Rev. ten Hove said there were no problems he was aware of and that everyone found it to be a great community. At Mayor Davis's request, he explained the workings of the Greenbelt Interfaith Leadership Association (GILA); he said the group usually meets on the second Thursday of the month. Rabbi Cohen concurred with his assessment.

Ms. Downs said the Catholic Community's ministry is with families that are slipping and having problems and that often the problems are financial.

Rev. Park said it would be helpful to have consolidated information on community service opportunities for young people. He commented on the importance of this for integrating youth into the community and making them feel as though they have a stake in it. Mr. McLaughlin said the City had worked with individuals and groups to tailor projects. Mayor Davis mentioned the various lake cleanup projects, for which groups or individuals may volunteer. Ms. Parker mentioned the importance of working through the school guidance counselor in order to be sure the activity would be eligible for community service credit for graduation, if that was being sought, since there are "rules and paperwork." She also said the Adult Daycare Center needs volunteers on Saturdays

in particular and would be pleased to have young people come in. Mr. Fisher suggested a double advantage in having students work as carriers for the News Review, since that also assists in getting the paper out to all the community.

Father Tappe introduced himself as the new pastor at St. Hugh's and expressed his interest in working with the group. Ms. McFarland said the Ladies of Charity at St. Hugh's see many people who need money to pay their bills but that it would be very helpful to have a resource to assist them with learning money management skills. Ms. Mach said credit unions have a national program to work with people on that and, in fact, pioneered that type of program. She suggested that if the Greenbelt Federal Credit Union does not offer it, they might be able to suggest who does.

Ms. McFarland also said it has been observed that there are people talking in Roosevelt Center with cell phones in a fashion that suggests there may be drug dealing. Mr. McLaughlin said anyone should feel free to call the police and report any suspicious behavior.

Mr. Dwivedi described some of the activities of the Temple, particularly preparing meals for shelters. He asked about problems at Cipriano Square shopping center, but it was clarified that this area is not part of Greenbelt and that any complaints should go to the county police.

Rev. Mentz described problems with u-turns being made near Holy Cross on Greenbelt Road at Lakecrest Drive. There was discussion of the decision of the State Highway Administration to put a light there. Mr. McLaughlin said that should happen within nine months or so. Rev. Mentz said that would take care of much of the problem.

Citing a recent break-in at his church, Rev. Park asked about security and lighting issues. Mr. McLaughlin said the Police Department could evaluate the property and make suggestions on security.

Rev. ten Hove briefly described plans for this year's 9-11 activity. He said GILA was working with Pleasant Touch, which would offer massage for healing, with the fees probably to be donated to one of the City's funds (e.g., Good Samaritan).

Ms. Mach said there has been a need expressed for a reliable third-party to accept donations on behalf of people who have suffered some loss—for example, as a result of car accidents, fires, or crimes—and that she had asked Rev. Dan Hamlin to bring this up with GILA. Mr. Fisher said it was brought up and that the feeling was that it should perhaps be handled by a church near the individuals involved. Ms. Conrad added that there are many issues with such an undertaking, such as responsibility for a separate bank account. Mr. McLaughlin said this topic came up when he introduced CARES Director Liz Park to GILA and that he had said if no other home could be found, the City might set up a third fund.

Other Business

Ms. Gallagher reviewed some calendar issues.

Mr. McLaughlin distributed scheduling information for the visiting mayors from Hungary who will be in the City on July 19.

Ms. Mach said she had been pursuing sites for possible public cable access for those who cannot receive municipal cable casting at home. The New Deal Café and the Greenbelt Library may be interested.

Mayor Davis said the GHI Board had voted not only to approve the placement of the interpretive sign as part of the ATHA program but to pay for half of the City's cost. She said they wanted to adjust the location slightly from that which had been proposed.

Mayor Davis said she had been reelected to the MML Board and would attend its retreat in Cambridge. Mr. McLaughlin said this cost had been identified in the budget.

Mayor Davis reported on attending a Commission on Crossroads Development meeting, in which Takoma Park and Langley Park asked if various problems they were confronting had spilled over into surrounding communities such as Hyattsville, College Park, and Greenbelt. She said everyone had concluded that the issue was no longer "spill over" but rather that the problems were regional.

Mayor Davis also attended a meeting School CEO André Hornsby had called with the mayors, of whom only seven attended. She said his goal was to garner support for his point of view. She said materials that were distributed were similar to those given out at the meeting he held with the City's Advisory Committee on Education earlier this year. She said he intends to put temporary buildings wherever he has to, including parking lots and playing fields. She also said that the overcrowding at Eleanor Roosevelt High School is partly explained by the fact that parents outside of Prince George's County may sign over their child to any adult in the county, thus allowing many young people to be eligible to attend the high school who should not be.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Gallagher

City Clerk